



DECISION MEMO

U.S. FOREST SERVICE

OUACHITA NATIONAL FOREST

MENA-ODEN RANGER DISTRICT

2020 SILVICULTURAL ACTIVITIES

PURPOSE AND NEED

The Mena Oden Ranger District proposes manual precommercial thinning (PCT) using chainsaws on approximately 344 acres in Polk, Scott, Yell, and Montgomery Counties, in Arkansas. The following table lists the areas proposed for treatment.

Area	Compartment	Stand	Legal Description	Treatment	Acres ¹
1	1066	23	T1N R24W Sec 8	Manual release	10
2	1127	15	T1S R27W Sec 32	Manual release	8
3	1128	32	T1S R27W Sec 32	Manual release	19
4	1136	4	T1N R27W Sec33	Manual release	23
5	822	1	T1N R31W Sec 23&26	Manual PCT w/chainsaws	35
6	826	1	T1N R31W Sec 29&32	Manual PCT w/chainsaws	27
7	826	2	T1N R31W Sec 32	Manual PCT w/chainsaws	34
8	950	38	T4S R31W Sec 1&2	Manual PCT w/chainsaws	24
9	953	4	T4S R31W Sec 10	Manual PCT w/chainsaws	22
10	1024	1	T1N R26W Sec 5	Manual PCT w/chainsaws	48
11	1039	20	T2N R25W Sec 16	Manual PCT w/chainsaws	34
12	1067	59	T1N R24W Sec 9&10	Manual PCT w/chainsaws	21
13	1095	22	T1N R26W Sec 23	Manual PCT w/chainsaws	39
				TOTAL	344

¹ Note: Acres were derived from GIS data, and product accuracy may vary. They may be developed from sources of differing accuracy, accurate only at certain scales, based upon modeling or interpretation, incomplete while being created or revised, etc. Using GIS products for purposes other than those, for which they were created, may yield inaccurate or misleading results. We released this information in January 2020. The Forest Service reserves the right to correct, update, modify, or replace GIS products without notification.

The purpose and primary goal of (PCT) is to reduce competition for nutrients and manage quality pine stands for future commercial harvest. PCT will be accomplished using chainsaws to cut and fell competing stems. Wildlife den trees and some existing large hardwood trees would be retained to complement the hardwood component. Other hardwood stems from desired species would be selected and retained from the developing regeneration.

None of these treatments involve herbicide application, road construction, or any other ground disturbing activities. Streamside management zones and drainages will not be treated.

DECISION

I have decided to approve the above detailed activities. These actions fall into a category of actions (timber stand and or wildlife habitat improvement activities which do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than one mile of low standard road construction, Category 6; Section 31.2 in FSH 1909.15) which the Chief of the Forest Service has determined will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment.

I find that there are no extraordinary circumstances that would warrant further analysis and documentation in an EA or EIS. I took into account resource conditions identified in agency procedures that should be considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances might exist:

- Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species – Forest Service sensitive species: No impact: Ozark chinquapin, may impact individuals, but not likely to cause a trend to federal listing or loss of viability: Diana fritillary. (Biological Evaluation, project file). The project “may affect, likely to adversely affect” the Northern Long-eared bat; however, there are no effects beyond those previously disclosed in the programmatic biological opinion dated January 25, 2018. (Project specific Fish and Wildlife Service letter signed December 31, 2019)
- Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds – there are no floodplains or jurisdictional wetlands within the project area and none will be impacted by project activities; there are no municipal watersheds in the project area
- Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas – none are present within the project area; none will be affected.
- Inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas – none are present within the project area; none will be affected.
- Research natural areas – none are present within the project area; none will be affected.
- American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites – There would be no extraordinary circumstances related to these resources because they are not present in the project area. This is based on site specific cultural resource surveys conducted on the analysis area, preparation of a Cultural Resources Report, and consultation on the proposed project with the Arkansas State Historic Preservation Officer.
- Archaeological sites or historic properties or areas – The actions will avoid any sites listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and will not cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural or historic resources. This is based on site specific cultural resource surveys conducted on the analysis area, preparation of a Heritage Resources categorical exclusion checklist signed December, 17, 2019.



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This action was originally listed as a proposal on the Ouachita National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions and updated periodically during the analysis. A project announcement letter was mailed to interested parties on December 19, 2019.

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS

This decision is consistent with the Ouachita National Forest Revised Land and Resource Management Plan as required by the National Forest Management Act.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW (OBJECTION) OPPORTUNITIES

Decisions that are categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) are not subject to an administrative review process (pre-decisional objection process) (Agriculture Act of 2014, Subtitle A, Sec. 8006).

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

The project may be implemented immediately.

CONTACT

For additional information concerning this decision, contact: Chris Morgan District Silviculturist, Mena-Oden Ranger District, 1603 Hwy 71 North, Mena AR, 71953, 479-394-2382.

TIM OOSTERHOUS
District Ranger

Date

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